

# THE MONTHS & OTHER POEMS

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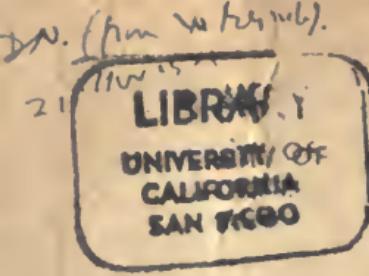


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THE MONTHS  
AND OTHER POEMS

NIHIL OBSTAT:

FR. BERNARD DELANY, O.P.

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FR. BEDE JARRETT, O.P.,

*Prior Provincial.*

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*Censor Deputatus.*

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EDM. CAN. SURMONT,

*Vicarius Generalis.*

WESTMONASTERII,

*Die 31<sup>o</sup> Maii, 1921.*

# THE MONTHS AND OTHER POEMS BY SISTER MARY BENVENUTA, O.P.

(DOROTHY I. LITTLE)

WITH A PREFACE BY  
PROFESSOR J. S. PHILLIMORE

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## PREFACE

THREE things are required in Art: perception, selection, expression. In one beautiful old sentence of Boccaccio's is more meaning than in many more sophisticated definitions of poetry; he wrote that it is *fervor quidam exquisite inveniendi et exquisite dicendi quod inveneris.* For the first part we may regard this faculty as an active glow of discovery and taking possession, and, passively, as an exceptional sensitiveness to impressions. Unless endowed with a mind that is aware of much in the world of sensible experience which escapes common perceptions and is at all times subtle and fleeting, nobody begins to be a poet. It belongs to his office to open his readers' eyes and sharpen their ears for them and quicken their affections, just because his 'invention' is more 'exquisite.' To the brute undistinguished mass of objects he can apply more powerful solvents than the majority command. Nature is only 'vocal to the initiated'; to the rest either muteness or a bewildering din.

## PREFACE

And what he alone can catch, he alone can fix and preserve. But if that part only be present, and his equipment do not contain this also, there will result a futile, unhappy condition of mind—a poet begun but unachieved, half a poet. Many good poets even have suffered from the pains of inarticulacy. In such cases it is the thought that is stunted and defective—at least for a time: for style is thinking out into words, as Newman said. Yet out of his momentary impotences a good poet may make good verses:

*I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.*

But in some the poetical faculty, though sharply aware that it is baffled and eluded, is still unable to be even with the elusiveness of things. For, in order to achieve, the poet must know how to think with his feelings and feel with his thoughts; then he will make beauty of his ideas and meaning of his impressions.

This may take place on the grand scale or the humble, in magnificent or in unambitious forms; but, for it to come about at all, the mind must number somewhere within its mechanism a piece

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whose function is that of moderator or reconciler. On this depend the justice and harmony that are notes of fine verse: for want of it, one will be unmeaningly pictorial, cloying with excess of description (like much of John Clare); another, trivial and dry by defect of image and rhythm (like much of Wordsworth).

The verses of the poetess to whose work these few pages are prefatory owe nothing to her introducer. Probably no one ever read a book for the prefactor's sake—even were it the much more honoured and famous pen for whom I am deputy here, Mr. Gilbert Chesterton. I accepted the invitation to write them because, the verses pleasing me, it seemed worth while to try and discover why.

One form that genius may take—as a distinguished French critic said of Virgil—is Taste. Many moderns fail because they have no talent for rejection, or, worse, do perversely anathematize the discipline. Like many another saying uttered for the purpose of morals, St. Paul's words—*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient*—echo apropos in the sphere of æsthetics. Now, what graces this little collection, with its happy air

## PREFACE

of fitness and consistency, is the rejection—probably rather spontaneous than deliberate—of anything strange or excessive. A bee knows what it can make honey of, and leaves other, maybe more rank and gaudy, allurements to flies. So this poetess yields her small but even, self-coloured and well-tempered product, as it were a honeycomb. She finds it no more necessary to be queer and astonishing in her metrical forms than a bee finds it necessary to vary the immemorial economy of its hexagons. So here we have the three members of composition inseparably allied in the bond of a contemplative soul. If we must stick to Boccaccio's figure, we would say that the glow of invention is smokeless and steady, neither dazzling nor scorching in its vibrations. Thought radiates out into feeling, feeling radiates inward into thought with a nice correspondence that inspires the unaffected adequacy of style. Hence the governing discretion that we call Taste. With these words I conclude my business and invite the reader to begin his.



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THANKS are due to the editors of the *Month*,  
the *Irish Rosary*, *Blackfriars*, and the Problems  
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their kindness in allowing me to republish some  
of the verses in this book.

S. M. B.



## JANUARY

A N armèd knight who carries the storm-wind's  
banner unfurled:  
The hoofs of his galloping charger ring on the  
roads of the frozen world.  
Strong and stern is his face, and no pity looks from  
his eyes.  
Little recks he of the shivering cold, or the poor  
man's cries.

## FEBRUARY

O PALEST maid with wide grey eyes  
Wherein the ready tears arise,  
And timid looks cast lowly down,  
A snowdrop chaplet is your crown,  
And rain-wet robe and soft brown hair  
Your virgin vesture frailly fair.

## MARCH

L AUGHING boy with the flying tresses,  
Your secret hid from the wind's wild guesses,  
I know the heart within you sings,  
For joy your sister April brings,  
The while the wind runs all about,  
To try and find your secret out.



## APRIL

S MILE in my eyes through your lovely tears,  
Wonder-child with the faery face ;  
To sit at your feet but a little space  
Were worth the frosts of a thousand years.

Sad are your smiles with a tender pain,  
Glad are your tears with a joy untold.  
Little white feet in the meadow's gold,  
The year is long till you come again.

## MAY

W HEN May comes dancing, dancing,  
The leaves break into singing ;  
Through all the forest by-ways,  
The blue-bells sway a-ringing ;  
And the wide world shouts for joyance  
In the gifts of her white hands' bringing.

## JUNE

R ED-LIPPED June from her rose-wreathed  
hair  
Shakes the shimmering petals down ;  
Slumbrous-sweet on the languid air  
Sweeps the trail of her perfumed gown.



## JULY

**I**N shadow of the poplar trees  
With whisp'ring leaves a-quiver,  
She sits among the rustling reeds  
Beside the singing river.

All day her warm and naked feet  
Have kissed the new-mown hay ;  
But her feet are fain of the river's kiss  
At close of the dusty day.

## AUGUST

**A**GAY and swarthy gipsy boy  
Outstretched along the summer grass,  
His stalwart arms beneath his head,  
He sees the white cloud-armies pass.  
The yellow-growing corn stands high  
Between him and the sun-filled sky,  
With drowsy poppies shining through,  
A sudden blaze against the blue.

## SEPTEMBER

**S**HE watches lonely on the silent hills,  
Her slow white fingers weaving veils of mist,  
The long brown hair on either side her face  
By sleeping sunbeams kissed.

Her eyes are dark with ancient mysteries,  
Where life and death lie sleeping, hand-in-hand ;  
And so she dreams, wrapped in the brooding hush  
That holds the spellbound land.



## OCTOBER

A CROSS the fields at break of day,  
All robed in mist, I see her pass.  
She throws the shining apples down  
To the children's feet in the orchard grass.

## NOVEMBER

WITH warp o' the rain and woof o' the mist,  
She weaves a shroud for the day that dies ;  
The grief of all the finished years  
Lives in her sorrow-haunted eyes,  
And the wind that faintly stirs her hair  
Is heavy with a world of sighs.

## DECEMBER

NO frost can chill the passion of your heart,  
No storm-winds drown the song of your  
delight,  
No rains shall quench the wonder in your eyes,  
Nor soil your stainless robes of virgin white.  
You have forgotten that the world is cold,  
Since Mary gave her Son to you to hold.

---

## THE PEAR TREE

WHEN Winter, like some evil dream  
The cheerful morning puts to flight,  
Gives place to Spring's divine delight,  
When hedgerows blossom, jewel-bright,  
And city ways less dreary seem,  
The faery child of sun and rain,—  
My neighbour's pear tree flowers again.

His plot is not so fair a thing  
As country gardens newly green,  
Where winds are fresh and skies are clean :  
There like some fair bedizened queen,  
In broidered kirtle walks the Spring :  
The dust and smoke have soiled her gown  
And dimmed her beauty here in town.

A dream of Paradisal grace  
To eyes long held in Purgatory,  
One wave-crest in a barren sea,  
A soft, low-breathing melody  
Heard sweetly in a lonely place—  
So grows the pear tree, not less fair  
For blooming in this sadder air ;

## *THE PEAR TREE*

But rather it is glorified,  
More gracious for the grimy wall  
Whereon the fragile petals fall,  
The rows of houses, grim and tall,  
That shade the garden's further side—  
More beautiful for growing here,  
Where even Spring is almost drear.

By day the music of the bees  
Makes melody with drowsy rune  
Among its flowers at stillest noon,  
But when the magic of the moon  
Fills all the world with mysteries,  
Along the boughs the low wind sings  
A song of long-forgotten things.

Ethereal in the dawning light,  
A sun-kissed cloud in glow of day,  
All rosy in the last red ray  
When twilight spreads her mantle grey,  
And like an angel tall and white,  
With murmurous wings and shining hair,  
By night the tree keeps vigil there.



## NIGHT IN THE GARDEN

(*To Ruth and Lorna.*)

O you remember how, one perfect night,  
Under the dream-filled shadow of the trees,  
We lay, and felt the fingers of the breeze  
Stir in our hair, a sudden cool delight ?

And how, before we slept, our listening ears  
Discerned the well-loved footfall on the grass,—  
Dear God, if once again her feet might pass  
To my desire, across the space of years.

And how she leaned and kissed us, motherwise,  
(It was too dark to see her dearest face),  
And how the moon rose in a cloudless space,  
And sleep trod softly under quiet skies.

Do you remember all the mystery  
Of waking heart to heart with sacred night ?  
Her secret face unveiled before our sight,  
Her arms our bed, her hair our canopy.

Dark leaves, low-murmuring their ancient lore,  
Shut out the silver sky; the darkness drew  
All sounds into itself, until they grew  
To be the voice of silence and no more—

## *NIGHT IN THE GARDEN*

The sway of branches by the wind scarce stirred,  
The babble of the spring below the wall,  
A far-off owl's ethereal, eerie call,  
The sudden twitter of a wakeful bird . . .

We saw that Eastern wizard, you and I,  
And in his hands the veils of dark withdrawn ;  
We saw the trailing raiment of the dawn  
Sweep all the stars out of the shining sky.

The secret voices of the night grew dumb  
Before the clamour of the waking world.  
The warrior sun, his flaming flags unfurled,  
Sang from the topmost hill, and day was come.



## THE SLEEP OF EARTH

LET Autumn lay her broideries by,  
The garrulous starlings still their mirth,  
And shrilling winds come not too nigh,  
Lest they should wake our Lady Earth.

Her long brown hair uncovered lies,  
Across her flowerless pillow spread;  
The cloudy curtains of the skies  
Make sombre hangings for her bed.

The fields that lie, one snowy lawn  
From hedge to leafless hawthorn hedge,  
Are like pale eyelids downward drawn,  
With the dark lashes at the edge.

Earth sleeps until the Prince shall break  
Through sharpest death and sealèd tomb,  
And stooping to her lips shall wake  
Their folded blossom into bloom.



## MATER INCOGNITA

SHE came to me in hidden guise  
Before the sunrise of God's grace.  
I could not see her blessed face  
Or know the marvel of her eyes.

Her mother-ear was quick to hark,  
As though to Heaven's keyhole laid,  
To listen to the child afraid  
And crying in the frightening dark.

I did not know whose hands they were  
That came with solace in the night,  
Until at length she brought a light,  
And I arose, beholding her.

With holy, healing waters first  
She laved me, and my fever fled ;  
To me a-hungered brought she Bread,  
And more than wine to stay my thirst.

Now folded close from every harm  
Within her very mantle's fold,  
I half forget the things of old  
And all the grim night's dark alarm.

*MATER INCOGNITA*

Mother, this thing I ask of you,  
That all my years be filled with praise,  
In reparation for the days  
Of empty grief—before I knew.



## CHRISTMAS

SLEEP, Son of Man, for now a little space  
God gives His best Belovèd His good gift  
Of blessed sleep—a little while to drift  
On waves of dreams that with quiet breathings  
lift  
The breast of Mary gazing on Your face.

Dream while You may, Your sleep must needs be  
brief,  
For down the road of centuries to be,  
The thronging footsteps of humanity  
Draw nearer, multiplying endlessly,  
To wake Your soul with sounds of human grief.

The saints, their feet made swift by longing's fire,  
Speed on to worship : kneeling at the door,  
All sinners whisper their *Confiteor*.  
Sages and fools, the rich man and the poor,  
Draw near to see the nations' great Desire.

Oh, sleep, before men's prayers are in Your ears,  
And blaze of altar candles in Your eyes.  
Round the low eaves already the wind cries ;  
Soon You shall hear the wind of human sighs,  
And on the roof the rain of human tears.

## CHRISTMAS

And not alone the future seeks Your face;  
You are the theme that all the ages sing.  
From out the past come prophet, priest, and king,  
With patient, humble footsteps hastening,  
O long-sought Son, to find Your resting-place.

Yet peace shall be Your sentinel to-night,  
And watch beside Your crib. The Magi still  
Follow, far off, the star from hill to hill,  
Till Your Epiphany the sign fulfil,  
Bringing You regal gifts for Your delight.

They bring You gold for heavy diadem  
That soon shall bow Your temples wearily,  
And frankincense, O priest that is to be,  
And myrrh to prophesy Your Calvary  
Whose darkness shadows even Bethlehem.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hold fast your joy this night, O Mother blest,  
E'er, like the ceaseless waves that shorewards  
break,  
The whisper of the *Ave* Gabriel spake—  
Which through the world shall endless echoes  
wake—  
Reverberating, rob you of your rest.

## *CHRISTMAS*

You smile, unheedful of the days to be  
And anguish following on the heels of bliss,  
Scarce thinking heaven itself holds more than  
this,  
These darling limbs, a hungry mouth to kiss,  
The full contentment of maternity.

What faint foreboding gathered in your mind,  
When Gabriel hailed you Mother of God's Son ?  
And knew you then how all the world should run,  
Like children to your knees, O patient one,  
To claim you Mother unto all mankind ?

Your myriad children, wrangling and perverse,  
Shall vex your mother's heart ; their ceaseless  
cries  
Shall rend the harmony of heaven's skies,  
With hope to find their healing in your eyes,  
And in your prayers the lifting of sin's curse.

The awestruck shepherds hasten even now  
To wake a troubled wonder in your eyes,  
With news of sudden-glorious, song-filled skies ;  
Yet nearer, sweeter, are your lullabies  
To Him before Whose feet the angels bow.

## *CHRISTMAS*

Keep while you may this joy new brought to birth,  
And learn the sweetness of fulfilled desire.  
It could not be that only sorrow's fire  
Should kindle love ; your gladness brings you  
nigher,  
For men have need of you to share their mirth.

And this one Night such rapture shall afford,  
Shall waken in your spirit such a song  
As—though the agony be sore and long—  
Through all the days of grief shall make you  
strong,  
And blunt the sharpness of the sevenfold sword.



## THE CAGE BIRD

I HOLD a captive hidden in my heart,  
A prisoned bird that sings to me apart,  
His single solace in his minstrel's art.

In fields of Paradise from whence he came,  
He heard the singers sound in notes of flame  
The burning bliss of the Belovèd Name.

The little human name that Mary sang,  
God's Name, that down the aisles of Heaven rang,  
Best Name, whereon all hope and healing hang.

He keeps not silence for the unbidden throng  
Of vagrant thoughts that fain would do him wrong,  
Bidding him learn of them a lesser song.

In Babylon of my heart he sings to me,  
While Death, the loiterer, keeps the cage's key :  
Ah, longing love, how shall you sing, set free !



## THE SINGING SAINT

H E sang of earth—so fair a lay,  
That Heaven stole his song away,  
And rapt he stood to serenade  
The Lady Poverty, God's maid.  
His praise a spangled web did spin  
To snare the whole creation in,  
And all wild things of field and wood  
He called into his brotherhood.  
He sang of Life immortal slain,  
In song that strove with tears of pain,  
Till, arrow-like from earthly sod,  
His singing pierced the Heart of God,  
And swift returning answer came  
In living tongues of wounding flame,  
That made in hands and feet and side  
New mouths to sing Christ crucified.

\* \* \* \* \*

The lips of years in leisured line  
Have worn the stone about his shrine,  
But still the Pentecostal breeze,  
That ceaseless sings in Sion's trees,  
Is murmurous with his melody ;  
And in her heart Humanity  
Stores for a balm to heal and bless,  
The fragrance of his mirthfulness.



## DESIRE

JOHN was Thy friend and leaned upon Thy breast,  
Small children sought Thine arms as birds their nest,  
And saints, a-droop for very weight of bliss,  
Have swooned to ecstasy beneath Thy kiss.

I thirst, afar, to compass all Thou art,  
Though reason mock the madness of my heart ;  
For how should souls to that pure bosom win,  
That scarce are weaned from the breasts of sin ?

Yet, Lord, remember how the storm-rent sea  
Once rocked its God to sleep in Galilee,  
And how its foaming kiss ~~Thou~~ wouldst not chide,  
Till human fear came clamouring to Thy side.

So from the world's unresting sea, my soul,  
Drawn forth from many waters to its goal,  
A frail drop shaken from some showering crest,  
Shall sink, asiled, absorbed within Thy breast.



## THE PENITENT

I BUILT a banquet-hall with careful art,  
Wherein my soul might revel and carouse.  
With heedful hands plucking the thorns apart,  
I pulled the dew-wet roses from their boughs,  
And wove a crimson crown to wreath my brows.

I welcomed laughing Youth to be my guest,  
And for my servant I installed Desire.  
The pictured walls rang loud with song and jest  
And mirthful music of the sweet-toned lyre ;  
And well I deemed my bliss might never tire.

But lo ! to-day the dawn is grey and cold,  
My guests are gone, like birds in winter flown.  
In this most weary morning unforetold,  
My candles out, my table overthrown,  
With patient, bleeding hands I toil alone,

Striving till I have hewn my banquet board  
And made thereof an altar ; it may be  
My soul shall yet find grace of Christ the Lord,  
When, looking forth of Heaven, He shall see  
My tears of penitential agony.

## *THE PENITENT*

The bakemeats from my feast shall feed His poor,  
My bread and wine at Mass be hallowèd.  
The roses that once grew beside my door  
Are scattered by the wind, their leaves are dead,  
And only thorns are left to crown my head.

Yet will I rise, and mend my broken lyre;  
One day I may find heart to sing again,  
When once my soul is purgèd in the fire  
Of sore repentance and remorseful pain,  
And I shall hymn my God in gladder strain.

I will arise and sever from its root  
The cursèd tree that once my soul called good,  
Whereof I plucked the fair, forbidden fruit  
(O bitter-sweet temptation unwithstood),  
And carve a crucifix from out the wood.

My burning eyes with sudden tears were dim  
When Youth went forth. I marked not where he went,  
But I will raise in memory of him,  
Here in my heart, a mournful monument,  
And pray for him and all his hours misspent.

## *THE PENITENT*

Desire is dead, long sick with hope deferred,  
And pale Submission now is acolyte  
To serve my altar ; deeply sepulchred  
Lies dead Desire, who some day in God's might  
Shall rise again, made blessed in His sight.

But hark, what footsteps on my threshold beat ?  
What guest should seek this shadowed house  
save Death ?  
“ I also toiled with bleeding hands and feet.  
Tortured, despised, I yielded up My breath.”  
What is Thy name ? “ My Name is Joy,” He saith.



## A SONG OF WHITE AND RED

WHITE and ruddy is my Beloved  
White of the Bread, red of the Wine,  
White and ruddy, white and ruddy,  
Fruit of the corn-sheaf and the vine.

White and ruddy is my Beloved,  
White of the Flesh, red of the Blood,  
White and ruddy, white and ruddy,  
Red in the flower, white in the bud.

White and ruddy is my Beloved,  
White in the crib, red on the Rood,  
White and ruddy, white and ruddy,  
God, my lover and my Food.



## THE NEW COUNTRY

" My beloved is the mountains,  
The solitary wooded valleys,  
The strange islands,  
The roaring torrents,

\*       \*       \*       \*  
The murmuring solitude."

*St. John of the Cross : A Spiritual  
Canticle.*

WHEN One, celestial Beggar, to my door  
Came to crave the world as alms,  
Ungrudgingly I laid the whole earth's store  
Of beauty in His piercèd palms—  
Laughter of winds that wake the youngling year,  
Summer, and Autumn with its satiate calms.

I walked that day where running water sang :  
Every kingcup at my feet  
Was coin to offer Him Whose Name still rang  
Through every pulse and made it beat  
A sacrificial hymn, made earth renounced  
And that renunciation strangely sweet.

## THE NEW COUNTRY

But like a child that wakes the first sunrise  
In some strange place, so have I seen,  
As through a window in His steadfast eyes  
Clearer heavens, hills more green,  
The sky-veiled mountains of the Godhead rise  
His Manhood's nearer, lowlier vales between.

What secret solitude where sunlight dreams  
In green-hung deeps is so apart  
From strife of tedious tongues and turbid streams  
As this seclusion of His Heart?  
This cloistral stillness utterly aloof,  
Where no birds sing, save one that cries, "Thou  
art."

His thoughts are flowers fairer than may grow  
In gardens of our coarser earth.  
The termless waters of His Being flow—  
Streams that know not source nor birth—  
To feed a sea unshored, insatiable.  
In Him I find not winter-time nor dearth.

Houses and brethren shall be given him,  
And lands,—so hast Thou promised, Lord.  
Who leaves the birds shall hear the Seraphim  
Sing each to each across a sward  
Blazoned with blooms whose colours grow not dim,  
In Thee, a wonderland yet unexplored.



## PROPHECIES

WHEN God stretched His span of sky,  
Was it for Thy canopy ?

When He spread the first fair sheet  
Of snow beneath His children's feet,

Did He think how it should be  
Cradle curtains hung for Thee ?

When the corn first ripened fair,  
Did He mind Him of Thy hair,

And when raindrops fell apace,  
Of Mary's kisses on Thy face ?

Hues where ocean deepest lies,  
Sure were foretastes of Thine eyes,

Winds and waters, birds at dawn,  
Bees at work on thyme-sweet lawn,

Crooning waves that kissed the beach,  
Held the echoes of Thy speech.

Nature in her sadder mood  
Grieved for dreaming of the Rood.

## *PROPHECIES*

Thinking on Thy thorn-crowned head,  
Roses blushed to burning red ;

And Thine Easter wakening  
Was foretold in every spring.

Verily, all things that be  
Tell some tender trait of Thee,

Prototype of God's great plan,  
Beauty's self, Thou Son of Man,

Stooping where the smiles of earth  
Figure forth a heavenly mirth.

She, Thy handmaid full of grace,  
Is but shadow of Thy face,

Prophetess, the ages long,  
Of fairer fields and loftier song.



## HAWKESYARD

(*House of Studies for the Dominican Novices*)

THIS is the mew of God set high  
Beneath the heavens' windy rafter,  
Whence all His falconry shall fly,  
And, clean of wing and clear of eye,  
Make sport to wake the angels' laughter.  
Ah, birds of God,  
What prey shall ye bring home hereafter ?

Here, hooded by His hand they sit,  
Nor fear the due monastic jesses  
That leash them to His wrist, and knit  
Their wills to His, as should befit  
The fledglings of His tendernesses,  
Who shall repay  
Some day, this spring-time of caresses.



## CONSOLATION

**S**O high Love heaps the fire, the leaping light  
Has lapped the soul in robes of royal red ;  
And even Brother Ass, poor witless wight  
Without the door, stands warmed and comforted.

## PILGRIM PRAYER

**O**H, singing is for solace of the way,  
But silence girds the goal,  
Silence—the soundless music of God's robe  
Trailing the floors of the soul.



## ST. JOSEPH OF THE ATTIC STAIRS

THE Saints, in every shape and size,  
About the choir and cloister stand,  
A goodly throng in plaster guise,  
To bless the house on every hand.

Our Lady's robes are gold and blue,  
A snow-white veil St. Catharine wears—  
But oh, my heart goes out to you,  
St. Joseph of the Attic Stairs.

The cloister Joseph's somewhat grim  
And stern of mien ; his arms enfold  
A wooden Babe, not like to Him  
Who nestles in your yearning hold.

No paint bedecks your well-worn frame,  
Indeed they say you're past repairs,  
But you are comely all the same,  
St. Joseph of the Attic Stairs.

My gravest grief, my faintest fear,  
I bring to your unheeded shrine ;  
You always turn a friendly ear,  
Dear Saint, to every want of mine.

*ST. JOSEPH OF THE ATTIC STAIRS*

Oh, when life's topmost stair is trod,  
And through the dark my spirit fares,  
Be near to bring my soul to God,  
St. Joseph of the Attic Stairs.

## **SONNETS**





## YOUTH AND AGE

WHEN we are old, and these our blithesome  
days

Are like a dream to one from slumber torn,  
Who, in the austere twilight of the morn,

Tries vainly to recall the sunlit ways

That but a moment since beguiled his gaze,—

Ah, let us, in the land of old forlorn,

Where old griefs dwell and sorrows newly born,  
Deny no suppliant in youth's name who prays.

Let us look backward from Death's shadowing  
wings,

Nor scorn the dreamer's trancèd melody

Because we have forgot the tongue he sings;

But rather deem that youth shall prove to be

The final goal of all Time's wanderings,

And Age a false and fleeting phantasy.



## TO FRANCIS THOMPSON

**S**O lofty was the stature of your soul,  
Your eyes saw heaven while your feet trod  
hell,

Poet who fain had fashioned words to tell  
The mysteries that lie beyond the goal  
Of human thought, and for your rhyming stole  
The speech of angels. We but stumbling spell  
The runes of Paradise; who reads them well  
Must take for lamp pain's lurid aureole.

Your name-saint of Assisi took for spouse  
The Lady Poverty for God's high sake,  
But you, enamoured of herself, would make  
Pale shrewish Pain the mistress of your vows;  
And lo! what melodies to blossom break  
Among the thorns wherewith she wreathed your  
brows.



## INVINCIBLE

B EYOND the heights of heaven and depths of hell,

Resistless as the fierce unfettered sea,

And broader than the sky's infinity,

Outreaching spheres where joy and sorrow dwell,

Enclosing all thy life within its spell,

And all thy pity and thy scorn of me,

Supplying all I ever craved of thee,—

Such is the love which thou hast thought to quell.

It draws thine inmost being unto mine ;

And though thou give another all thy heart,

My love of thee enfolds both it and him,

With all that is, and all that shall be thine ;

Although I live my life from thee apart,

And dwell of all thy memories most dim.



## TO J. V. G. (AGED SIX)

(1910)

IM, when the lonely years grow very nigh  
Wherein my soul shall hunger after rest,  
And life shall lose its young impassioned zest,  
When joy, that follows youth, shall pass me by,  
And all earth's melodies conceal a cry,  
And sorrow stay my pale, perpetual guest,  
When memory plucks the heart from every jest,  
And suffocates all laughter with a sigh,—

How closely shall I guard your memory,  
The while you tread life's road with hope for  
guide,  
All unremembering, on eager feet.  
Come close, grey eyes, and warm young mouth  
so sweet;  
A hoarded treasure shall your kisses be,  
Like to the Christ-Child's on the face of Bride.



## DOMINI CANES

WHEN Hell's wild warriors rode the world  
rough-shod,  
Men's angel guardians drooped their wings and  
wept ;  
And sins that once in dusky by-ways crept  
Now on the highroads loud in triumph trod.  
Earth seemed subservient to the devil's nod ;  
But while His very friends like sluggards slept,  
Forth from the flaming Heart of Love there leapt,  
Unleashed by Mary's hands, the Hounds of God.

Great Dominic, star-haloed, heads the pack,  
Deep-mouthed, melodious, hunting down their  
prey  
Of human souls in house and field and street ;  
Until the heavenly Huntsman call them back  
With death's clear horn, to lie at close of day  
Beneath her mantle's fold, at Mary's feet.





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